



**EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, September 13, 2017**

The Early Childhood Council (ECC) convened in a regular meeting on Wednesday, September 13 2017, at Workforce Solutions in Austin, Texas.

Board Members in Attendance: Chair Larry Elsner, Raul Alvarez, Mary Jane Burson, Jennifer Garcia, Rebecca Harrison, Aletha Huston, Roscoe Overton, Sr., Rhonda Paver, Jacquie Porter, Carrie Semple, and Brook Son. Staff in Attendance: Austin Public Health Department (APH) staff – Cindy Gamez, Laura Williamson, and Rachel Farley.

Chair Elsner called the Board Meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

1. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Members of the audience introduced themselves to the Council members. A new Council member, Jennifer García, introduced herself. Rachel Farley is the City of Austin staff person who will be supporting the Council.
2. **DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** Members Porter and Garcia signed a conflict of interest on Item 6b.
3. **CITIZEN COMMUNICATION:**
 - a) Terry Lewis, Together for Children, announced upcoming event called Strong Foundations Matter Symposium in San Marcos.
 - b) Carlos Soto, Community Advancement Network passed out a CAN Dashboard 2017 report on Key Socioeconomic Indicators for Greater Austin and Travis County, including school readiness data.
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Member Roscoe moved to approve the August 9, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes and Member Harrison seconded. Minutes were approved with one edit on page 2 by a vote of 11-0.
5. **Presentations –**
 - a) **Evidence Based Strategies: Family & Community Engagement in Early Childhood-** Leonor Vargas, Administrative Supervisor of Parent Programs, Austin ISD, and Member Porter, Early Childhood Director, Austin ISD
 - AISD examining how to improve parent engagement using a “Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships” from Harvard focused on building and capacity of both families and staff to achieve effective family-school partnerships.
 - Developed draft plan for the district with partnerships, strengths, social support, shared responsibility as principles for AISD engagement with families; emphasis on equity;
 - Parent Support Specialists (PSSs)
 - There are 60+ parent support specialists in Title I schools in Austin ISD who form a bridge between families, schools, community, and connect families with resources.
 - The City of Austin (COA) provides 60% of PSS funding; Title I funds the rest. COA funding ends in Dec 2017; PSSs would go to 50% time if it is not continued.
 - b) **VROOM-** Jessica Dominguez, Program Manager, Success by Six, United Way for Greater Austin
 - VROOM is a free app available in English and Spanish, to spread awareness to caregivers

about the importance of the first five years and to empower them with ideas for sparking “brain-building moments.” Will be available in January through direct text message and will have capability to include area-specific messages, like PK enrolling now in AISD.

6. WORK GROUP REPORTS AND POSSIBLE ACTIONS

a) Executive Work Group – Larry Elsner

- Group met last week for an orientation. October meeting a good time for ECC members to discuss ECC’s organization, members’ interests, workgroups.
- On November 3, the local Chamber of Commerce is having an event where the U.S. Chamber of Commerce will present report with the Kellogg Foundation on the business case for high quality child care.

b) Cross Systems Work Group – Brook Son

- Workgroup is having a mini-retreat to reset priorities. Housing likely to remain a priority.
- Member Son to resign as workgroup chair, but will remain a member.
- Update on partnership with APD
- COA funding for AISD PSSs- (Possible Action Item- Discussion and approval related to sustaining COA funding for AISD PSSs)
 - Recommendation language: “The Early Childhood Council recommends that City Council continue the current level of funding for the AISD Parent Support Specialists at Title I schools and explore ways of expanding support for parent support specialists in Title I schools in other school districts that serve Austin children.”
 - Chair Elsner motioned to approve the recommendation, Member Huston seconded the motion. The motion passed 9-0 (Members Porter and Garcia abstained)

c) Policy Work Group – Aletha Huston

- Continuity of Care money is in budget being considered by City Council.
- Workgroup members met with council members and party leaders over the summer. Topics included neighborhood housing programs and the need for family-friendly housing to be a part of Code Next, both of which are School Readiness Action Plan (SRAP) Ready Communities tactics.
- Part of the ACC or City building plans for the Highland Mall redevelopment will include a child care center, but Council wants to investigate the need for this further.

d) Public Engagement Work Group – Monica Sanchez

- No discussion

7. STAFF BRIEFING AND POSSIBLE ACTIONS

- ### a) Hurricane Harvey Relief Effort Status Update- The city-run mega-shelter will be closing soon as most people transition to hotels or other housing.

8. RELATED GROUPS-

a) United Way Update- Mary McHorse, Success by 6

- SRAP orientation luncheon at UWATX on September 19, from 12:00-1:00 pm
- Early Childhood Stakeholder Meeting at UWATX on Thursday, September 28, 3:00-4:30

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- ### a) October meeting: 30 minutes- Budget presentation from Austin Public Health (Cindy Gamez to confirm) and 1 or more hours to discuss ECC structure
- ### b) November meeting- vote on dates and locations for 2018 meetings

ADJOURNMENT –Chair Elsner adjourned the meeting at 10:39 a.m. without objection.